

## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT**

### **January 2ND – January 6TH, 2012**

**Below is an informal overview of the Washington D.C. activities of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs:**

*THE SENATE WAS NOT IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

*THE HOUSE WAS NOT IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

### **OBAMA BYPASSES THE SENATE – CONSUMER PROTECTION BOSS GETS RECESS APPOINTMENT**

The new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau finally has a director, as a result of an appointment that bypassed the Senate confirmation process and infuriated Congressional Republicans. President Obama said Wednesday he is putting Richard Cordray, a former Ohio attorney general, in the job as a recess appointee. Cordray is expected to be sworn in later this week.

The move defied procedural roadblocks Republican lawmakers said would bar the President from making appointments during the current congressional recess. GOP leaders were quick to accuse the president of ignoring constitutional prerogatives and Senate precedents.

Senate Republicans had taken the position that they would block any nominee to the consumer post created by the Dodd-Frank financial regulatory overhaul law to serve as a watchdog for borrowers seeking mortgages, credit cards and other financial products.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said Obama “arrogantly circumvented the American people” and warned that the move will have long-lasting consequences.

Massachusetts Sen. Scott P. Brown was the only Republican to come out in support of the appointment. He called Cordray “the right person to lead the agency and help protect consumers from fraud and scams.” (*Excerpt from CQ Today Clip: Ben Weyl, Jan. 4, 2012*)

### **CONGRESSWOMAN WILSON LEADS EFFORT TO HELP HAITIANS OBTAIN VISAS**

Rep. Frederica Wilson announced on Thursday that she is leading a bipartisan effort by members of the Florida congressional delegation to assist Haitians obtain family-based and temporary work visas as Haiti continues to rebuild from the devastating January 12, 2010 earthquake. In a letter sent to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, the Congresswoman is joined by

Senators Bill Nelson and Marco Rubio, and U.S. Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Mario Diaz-Balart, David Rivera, Ted Deutch and Corinne Brown.

The letter says, "It is our understanding that tens of thousands of Haitians have been approved for U.S. residency, yet have been forced to wait several years to leave disaster-stricken Haiti." The letter goes on to say, "We would appreciate your assessment of the situation and ways in which you could potentially increase or expedite family migration."

"Since remittances undoubtedly play such a huge role in Haiti's reconstruction and stabilization efforts, it is critically important that we explore additional ways to help Haitians," they wrote. "Low-skilled, temporary employment seems to be one way in which a limited number of Haitians may come to the United States, reunite with their families, help build the U.S. economy, and, most importantly, assist Haiti in its reconstruction through repatriated skills and capital."

Senators and Representatives are requesting a DHS review of why the H-2A and H-2B temporary worker programs exclude Haitians, and what specific steps the Haitian government can take to ensure their inclusion in the program. According to the National Visa Center, of the more than 100,000 Haitians waiting for their approved family-based visa numbers to become available, 15,584 are the spouses and children of U.S. citizens, and another 16,216 are the adult children of Legal Permanent Residents.

## **OIA TO JOIN MEETING WITH REP. ROS-LEHTINEN AND USACE SEC. DARCY ON BEACH RENOURISHMENT ISSUE**

Next week, OIA will join a meeting with Rep. Ros-Lehtinen, U.S. Army Corps Secretary Darcy, USAC Col. Pantano, and David Hobbie (Head civilian for the Jacksonville District and Chief of Programs and Project Management), along with Miami Beach and Key Biscayne officials to discuss beach renourishment and foreign vs. domestic sand sourcing issues.

## **EPA CHIEF IN MIAMI TO HIGHLIGHT WATER AND ENERGY SAVINGS**

On Thursday, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson traveled to Miami to tour the Brownsville Transit village, which is an environmentally sustainable building project in an underserved community that incorporates water and energy-saving features.

Set to open in March, the project is being developed by Carlisle Development Group, in conjunction with Alterna Corp., an EPA WaterSense partner and leading distributor of green building products. Estimated water savings of Brownsville Transit Village are over 5 million gallons per year and roughly \$50,000 per year in utility savings.

EPA's WaterSense initiative brings together local water utilities, governments, product manufacturers, and retailers to promote water efficiency, and enhance the market through innovation and product design for water efficient products, programs, and

practices. EPA and its WaterSense partners have helped Americans save 125 billion gallons of water and more than \$2 billion in water and energy bills. By reducing water consumption, the program has reduced 6 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions, protecting the health of Americans.

## **CLIMATE COMMUNITIES**

On Thursday, Climate Communities held their weekly webinar entitled “2012 Outlook - Funding for Local Sustainability Efforts.” The call focused on Congress seeking to trim or eliminate funding for renewable energy, energy efficiency, clean vehicles, smart growth, green infrastructure and other initiatives that benefit cities and counties. This federal investment is critical to local efforts to reduce energy use, curb greenhouse gas emissions, improve air and water quality and decrease vehicle miles traveled. Climate Community officials said, “As communities have demonstrated, federal sustainability funding enables cities and counties to leverage additional public and private dollars, and helps to create new jobs and economic growth.”

During the call, Climate Communities staff identified discussed the landscape and opportunities for cities and counties to support local priorities with federal sustainability funding in 2012, and provided an overview of the congressional policy landscape by mentioning opportunities for federal sustainability funding such as technical assistance from EPA, DOE, DOT and other federal agencies as well as the federal sustainability policies that are likely to be debated in Congress, and will how will they impact cities and counties.

## **THE 2012 GOP PRESIDENTIAL FIELD**

The GOP presidential primary season kicked off on Tuesday with the Iowa Caucuses. Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney narrowly defeated former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum. Rep. Ron Paul came in third. After a disappointing sixth place finish, Congresswoman Michele Bachman suspended her campaign. The next primary is on Tuesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> in New Hampshire. Florida will hold their primary election on January 31<sup>st</sup>.

Newt Gingrich – former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives  
Jon Huntsman – former Gov. of Utah & former Ambassador to China  
Ron Paul – U.S. Rep. from Texas  
Rick Perry – Gov. of Texas  
Buddy Roemer – former Gov. of Louisiana\*  
Mitt Romney – former Gov. of Massachusetts  
Rick Santorum – former Sen. from Pennsylvania

*(\*will not be on FL primary ballot)*

*-Herman Cain, former CEO of Godfather's Pizza, has suspended his campaign  
-Michele Bachmann, U.S. Rep. from Minnesota, has suspended her campaign*

## **FEDERAL LOBBYIST REPORTS**

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## **NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR: JANUARY 9TH – JANUARY 13TH**

*The House and Senate will not be in session next week.*

## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT**

### **January 16TH – January 20TH, 2012**

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*THE SENATE WAS NOT IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

*THE HOUSE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

### **PRESIDENT OBAMA TO GIVE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 24TH**

The House and Senate will convene for a joint session of Congress on the evening of Tuesday, January 24, 2012 for the purpose of receiving the State of the Union address from President Barack Obama.

### **OIA PARTICIPATES IN MEETINGS WITH NATION'S LARGEST AIRPORTS (THE "G-10") - BRIEFINGS WITH CBP, STATE & U.S. TRAVEL ON STAFFING ISSUES AND VISA WAIVER TOP AGENDA**

OIA, on behalf of MIA, attended the G-10 Working Group's meetings in Washington last week. The G-10 was formed to address the priorities and unique federal regulatory and agency staffing issues that confront the nation's largest airports. The group met with the airport industry trade association, Airports Council International – North America (ACI-NA); the nation's leading travel and tourism industry association, the U.S. Travel Association (USTA); the U.S. Department of State (DOS); and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP).

The meetings focused primarily on increasing federal support for travel promotion and facilitation, which provides a substantial economic benefit to the G-10's communities. The meetings also focused on visa issues and identifying regulatory and legislative means to increase the ease with which foreign travelers can visit the U.S. for the purpose of recreational and retail tourism. The group's visit was timely, as President Obama announced a national travel and tourism initiative which addressed some of the concerns outlined by the G-10.

### **PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES NATIONAL TRAVEL & TOURISM INITIATIVE ON MAIN ST., USA IN ORLANDO'S MAGIC KINGDOM, ISSUES EXECUTIVE ORDER**

On Thursday, President Obama issued an Executive Order that directed his administration to create a new national tourism strategy focused on creating jobs and

increasing visa processing capacity in countries with frequent visitors to the U.S., including Brazil. Tourism is a major contributor to the United States economy and South Florida specifically. In July, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Javier Souto, Commissioner Jose “Pepe” Diaz and Commissioner Rebeca Sosa introduced a resolution to the Board of County Commissioners calling on the federal government to ease visa restrictions in certain Latin American countries, including Brazil. A copy of the President’s Executive Order is attached.

In 2010, the U.S. welcomed nearly 60 million international visitors and those visitors infused \$134 billion into our economy. Florida has a \$65 billion annual tourism industry, and nationwide the industry represents nearly three percent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is responsible for some 7.5 million jobs, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

According to a recent media report analyzing the economic impact of Brazilians visiting South Florida, the region stands to benefit tremendously from the President’s initiative. For example, in the first nine months of 2011, an estimated 1.1 million Brazilians spent \$1.6 billion in Florida, an increase of nearly 60 percent from 2010. Among foreign nations, only Canada sends more visitors to Florida. The President’s initiative will seek to increase the visa processing capacity in China and Brazil by 40 percent over the coming year. OIA will continue to work with the administration, congressional delegation and USTA, among other stakeholders, to ensure favorable federal policy with respect to visa and tourism issues.

## **OIA, SOUTH FLORIDA GOVERNMENT COALITION – CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR FEDERAL UASI FUNDING & TIER 1 STATUS**

OIA and Miami-Dade County departments and officials continue their pursuit of federal emergency management dollars and advocacy for the inclusion of the Ft. Lauderdale/Miami UASI for recognition in the Tier 1 status.

On Wednesday Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Frederica Wilson, Ted Deutch and Alcee Hastings’ office spoke with Elizabeth Harman, Asst. Director at DHS for Grants and impressed upon DHS the importance of the UASI program and for appropriate consideration of the Ft. Lauderdale/Miami UASI. Throughout the call, the members advocated for Tier 1 consideration.

As part of the conversation, DHS acknowledged the unique risk factors for the UASI that should be considered, including those we raised during the coalition's September meetings: seaports and coastline, and cruise line occupants. DHS advised that no allocation decisions have yet been made, however, they advised that internal decisions about Tier status may be decided by this Friday or Monday. Separately, during the call DHS raised criticisms that have been leveled by Congress about the delays in spending of already appropriated and allocated UASI funds, with a significant amount from 2007-2011 not spent. DHS is providing Rep. Deutch with details about this per their records for the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale UASI.

Also this week, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez joined a bi-partisan letter being sent by Mayors from throughout the U.S. urging that DHS protect FY 2012 homeland security grants funds to UASI and that DHS also carve out funding for the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) program. Both UASI and MMRS are critical federal funding streams for Miami-Dade County.

Earlier this year, Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners Chairman Joe Martinez joined mayors from throughout the country, including Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado, in a letter to U.S. House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers (KY) which strongly opposed the FY 2012 House Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee action to limit the funds provided under section 2003 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 604) to the top 10 highest risk urban areas. Currently, Miami-Dade County and City of Miami receive funding under this program; however, under the provisions of this bill, they are one of the jurisdictions that would be removed from the funding list. OIA, MDPD, OEM and the South Florida UASI delegation worked with the Federal Lobbying Team in a successful effort to urge congress to reverse this provision.

Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz also voiced strong support for UASI funding in his recent official visit to Washington, while meeting with the White House and Miami-Dade County congressional delegation.

## **OIA ATTENDS WASHINGTON REPS MEETING ON FEDERAL FUNDING FOR PARKS & REC IN TRANSPORTATION BILL**

Last week, OIA attended a meeting of local governments from around the country in Washington D.C. at the Rails to Trails office, on behalf of Miami-Dade Parks & Recreation (MDPR). The purpose of the meeting was to develop strategies to help protect critical federal sources of funding for trails and active transportation. Dedicated federal funding for core programs directed toward local governments for trails, walking and bicycling would be effectively eliminated in the Senate version of the transportation reauthorization measure, and a House version doesn't appear any better.

A major point of discussion centered on local governments ability to influence the discourse in Congress, as the legislative calendar is winding down and there is limited

opportunity to move a transportation bill in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. The group discussed support for local government “resolutions or urgings” that could be an important tool for local elected officials advocating directly to Senators and Representatives. OIA provided MDPR with a briefing of the meeting and will continue to monitor the transportation reauthorization bill as it proceeds through legislative process.

## **IN RESPONSE TO MIAMI-DADE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION - DHS ANNOUNCES EXTENSION OF VISAS FOR LOW-SKILLED WORKERS FROM HAITI**

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)’s U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services agency announced this week that it is making Haiti one of the countries eligible for a visa program for low-skilled workers. The awarding of H-2A and H-2B visas to Haitian nationals is a culmination of legislative efforts led by members of the Florida Congressional delegation, including Sens. Bill Nelson and Marco Rubio, and Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Ted Deutch, Corinne Brown, Frederica Wilson, David Rivera and Mario Diaz-Balart.

According to the Center for Global Development, international migration has lifted more Haitians out of poverty than all the foreign aid, investment and trade preferences extended to Haiti over the past 30 years – combined. This migration has drastically increased remittances to Haiti from the U.S., which are estimated to total more than \$2 billion per year, representing nearly twice the amount the U.S. has pledged to Haiti in assistance.

Rep Wilson said, *“This is great news for the people of Haiti who are rebuilding their lives while their homeland recovers from the devastating earthquake that struck their nation two years ago last week. By making Haiti one of the 58 countries eligible for the H-2A and H-2B visas, Haitians can now contribute to Haiti’s stability through repatriated skills and capital. It’s a win-win for thousands of Haitian families who remain displaced and the businesses here that employ them.”*

## **SEN. NELSON & REP. RIVERA LEAD EFFORT TO BAN IMPORTING OF PYTHONS – PRESERVING ALREADY FRAGILE GLADES ECOSYSTEM**

In December, the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution introduced by Commissioner Dennis Moss and Commissioners Sally Heyman and Jose “Pepe” Diaz, urging the federal government to ban the import or sale of Burmese Pythons and eight additional large constrictor snakes.

On Tuesday, U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced a nationwide ban on the importing of Burmese pythons and three other non-native, large constrictor snakes, during a press conference in the Everglades. The ban will assist in the ongoing federal



funding and restoration efforts taking place in the Everglades. Miami-Dade Congressional delegation members Reps. Rivera and Wasserman Shultz along with Sen. Nelson, have worked tirelessly to achieve this ban. They were joined in November by Florida Reps. Tom Rooney, Deutch, Richard Nugent, Vern Buchanan and Allen West in sending a letter to President Barack Obama requesting that he direct his Office of Management and Budget to release a long-standing proposal by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list nine species of large constrictor snakes as prohibited injurious species under the Lacey Act.

Rep. Rivera applauded the announcement, *“I welcome the announcement from Secretary Salazar and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service banning the importation and interstate transportation of these four non-native snakes that have invaded South Florida, disturbing our fragile ecosystem, threatening our native species and even causing human deaths. These are not harmless pets.”*

Rep. Rivera went on to say, *“These dangerous, predatory species are allowed to establish themselves and wreak havoc on our native wildlife, counteracting efforts and wasting precious resources to restore the Everglades. I continue to call on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list all nine species of constrictor snakes as prohibited injurious species under the Lacey Act for the good of South Florida’s environment and the safety of our people.”*

The final rule lists the Burmese python, the yellow anaconda, the northern African python and the southern African python as prohibited injurious species under the Lacey Act. There is still a call to ban five additional species of snake as well. OIA will continue to monitor federal funding for Everglades restoration and ongoing efforts to ban the additional snake species.

## **MEMBERS MEET WITH MERCEDES-BENZ IN RESPONSE TO THEIR USE OF ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA IN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN**

On Wednesday, Reps. Mario Diaz-Balart, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Albio Sires, and David Rivera held a media availability following a meeting with Daimler External Affairs and Public Policy representatives. The meeting was in response to Daimler AG, the German company that manufactures Mercedes-Benz cars using the image of Ernesto “Che” Guevara during a promotional presentation at the International Consumer Electronics Show. The members were upset that the company would use the image of “a ruthless, corrupt mass-murderer” to sell vehicles and that it was insensitive to the plight of the Cuban people.

## **OIA WORKING WITH CHAIRMAN MICA, MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT: CHAIRMAN MICA TO HOST MIC TOUR JANUARY 30<sup>TH</sup>**

OIA, MIA and House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Chairman John Mica’s office are working to organize a tour hosted by Chairman Mica to tour the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC). The Chairman has invited railroad executives from throughout

the country to take a tour of the MIC and a briefing and demonstration ride on Tri-Rail's commuter rail diesel multiple unit (DMU) passenger rail cars. The event will take place in late January to coincide with a field hearing in Sunny Isles. In addition to the rail industry executives, Chairman Mica has reached out to Mayor Gimenez, the BCC, congressional delegation and members of the House T&I Committee to participate in the event.

## **OIA AND FEDERAL LOBBYING TEAM TO ATTEND NACo WASHINGTON REPS MEETING**

OIA, along with the Federal Lobbying Team, will attend Monday's meeting of NACo Washington Representatives. Topics for the meeting will include a discussion on NACo's 2012 Legislative Priorities, and NACo's legislative staff will provide a brief overview of several pressing legislative matters. In the last year, Commissioner Sally Heyman and Vice Chairwoman Audrey Edmonson attended NACo's legislative conference. More recently, Commissioner Lynda Bell was briefed by Legislative Director Edwin Rosado on NACo's upcoming legislative priorities. NACo, along with the US Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with a coalition of business leaders and state and local entities, were instrumental in mobilizing efforts to repeal the 3% withholding tax that would have had a detrimental financial impact to Miami-Dade County.

## **SUPREME COURT JUSTICE SAMUEL ALITO TO VISIT FIU ON JANUARY 26TH**

The FIU College of Law will host Justice Alito for the College of Law's Moot Court Final Round on the evening of January 26<sup>th</sup>. The event will take place in the FIU College of Law Ceremonial Courtroom.

## **CLIMATE COMMUNITIES**

"Local Governments & EPA's Green Power Communities Program" was the title of this week's Climate Communities webinar. The focus was on as Climate Communities state, "purchasing green power, or electricity generated from environmentally preferable renewable resources such as solar, wind, geothermal, low-impact biomass, and low-impact hydro resources, provides communities with an easy and effective way to reduce their carbon footprint." Climate Communities cited the fact that local governments that purchase green power can spur local residents and businesses to follow suit and that using green power can also accelerate the development of new, domestic renewable energy sources, while also improving the security of America's energy supply.

Mollie Lemon, the Communications Director for EPA's Green Power Communities Program, joined the webinar to discuss the initiative's tools and resources and spoke of

local governments that are pioneering efforts to purchase green power. Ms. Lemon mentioned that the program can reduce the impacts of community energy use and help cities and counties overcome green power procurement challenges. EPA designates local governments as Green Power Communities when they work in partnership with businesses and residents to buy green power in amounts that meet or exceed EPA's purchase requirements.

## **THE 2012 GOP PRESIDENTIAL FIELD: THE FINAL FOUR, IN JANUARY**

This week, Texas Governor Rick Perry suspended his campaign for the Republican Presidential nomination and endorsed former House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Earlier in the week, former Governor of Utah John Huntsman dropped out of the race and endorsed former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney. On Saturday, South Carolina holds their primary election. Florida will follow suit with their primary on January 31<sup>st</sup>.

### ***CANDIDATES REMAINING***

Newt Gingrich – former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives  
Ron Paul – U.S. Rep. from Texas  
Mitt Romney – former Gov. of Massachusetts  
Rick Santorum – former Sen. from Pennsylvania

*-Herman Cain, former CEO of Godfather's Pizza, has suspended his campaign  
-Michele Bachmann, U.S. Rep. from Minnesota, has suspended her campaign  
-Rick Perry, Gov. of Texas, has suspended his campaign  
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## **NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR: JANUARY 23RD – JANUARY 27TH**

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*The Senate will be in session next week.*

## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT**

### **January 23RD – January 27TH, 2012**

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### **PRESIDENT OBAMA GIVES STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS**

The House and Senate convened on Tuesday for a joint session of Congress for the purpose of receiving the State of the Union address from President Barack Obama.

*See attachment for a complete summary and analysis of the State of the Union, courtesy of the County's Federal Contract Lobbyist, Patton Boggs.*

### **OIA WORKS WITH CHAIRMAN MICA, MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, FDOT: CHAIRMAN MICA TO HOST MIC TOUR JANUARY 30<sup>TH</sup>**

House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Chairman John Mica will tour the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) on Monday, January 30<sup>th</sup>. The Chairman has invited railroad executives from throughout the country to take a tour of the MIC and receive a briefing and demonstration ride on Tri-Rail's commuter rail diesel multiple unit (DMU) passenger rail cars. The event will coincide with a field hearing in Sunny Isles. In addition to the rail industry executives, Chairman Mica has reached out to Mayor Gimenez, Chairman Martinez and the Board of County Commissioners, in addition to the Miami-Dade congressional delegation and members of the House T&I Committee to participate in the event.

### **WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCES NOMINEE FOR AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF HAITI**

On Monday, President Obama nominated Ambassador Pamela Ann White for Ambassador to the Republic of Haiti. Ambassador White, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Career Minister, currently serves as the U.S. Ambassador to The Gambia.

Prior to serving in The Gambia, she was United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director in Liberia, Tanzania, and Mali. From 1999 to 2001, she served as USAID's Deputy Director for East Africa. Previously, Ambassador White held a number of overseas positions with USAID, including: Executive Officer in Senegal, Haiti, Egypt and South Africa and Community Liaison Officer in Burkina Faso. Prior to joining USAID in 1978, Ambassador White served as a Peace Corps volunteer

in Cameroon from 1971 to 1973. She holds a B.A. from the University of Maine, an M.A. from the School for International Training, and an M.S. from the Industrial College of Armed Forces.

## **SECRETARY PANETTA RESPONDS TO REP. ROS-LEHTINEN & WASSERMAN SCHULTZ LETTER REGARDING MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AEROSPACE SHOW**

Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Wasserman Schultz and members of the Miami-Dade congressional delegation received a response from Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta this week regarding the County's and Beacon Council's efforts to host the Miami International Aerospace Show (MIAS) at Homestead Air Reserve Base (HARB).

In his response, the Secretary states that he has directed the Secretary of the Air Force to "re-look into this matter." OIA along with the Beacon Council and with the strong bi-partisan support of the entire Florida congressional delegation and Gov. Scott's office continue to advocate for the necessary approvals to use HARB for the MIAS to drive the economic development of the aerospace industry and job opportunities for veterans throughout Florida.

## **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FUNDS FIU TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH**

Late last week, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced \$77 million in grants to 22 University Transportation Centers (UTCs) to advance research and education programs that address critical transportation challenges facing the nation. FIU's Lehman Center for Transportation Research was among those to receive grants as they are members of three of the UTCs recipients.

The UTCs, which are located throughout the United States, conduct research that directly supports the priorities of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the participating universities are a critical part of the national transportation strategy. The Lehman Center belongs to a Tier I UTC led by Georgia Institute of Technology, a Regional UTC led by the University of Florida, and a Tier I-Transit UTC led by the University of South Florida. FIU professors Albert Gan, Mohammad Hadi, and Fabian Cevallos lead FIU's participation at the three centers.

DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA), which administers the UTC program, used a competitive selection process to select ten University Transportation Centers, two Transit-Focused UTCs, and ten Regional UTCs. The centers will advance U.S. transportation technology and expertise in research, education, and technology transfer. Each one of the selected UTCs will receive a \$3.5

million grant which they must match with funds from non-federal sources. The 22 UTCs selected are all consortia, involving a total of 121 different universities.

FIU and Rutgers are the only two universities with membership in all three UTC categories. FIU College of Engineering and Computing Dean Amir Mirmiran attributed FIU's success to the strength of its transportation program. The Lehman Center already has strong working relationships with transportation agencies in South Florida, including Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Districts 4 and 6, the Miami-Dade Expressway (MDX), Miami-Dade Transit (MDT), Miami-Dade Public Works, Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust (CITT), and Broward County Transit.

UTCs work with regional, state and local transportation agencies to help find solutions to challenges that directly impact their communities and affect the efficiency of the nation's transportation system. UTC projects are peer-reviewed and the results of their work are shared with the national transportation community to encourage greater progress through collaboration. The selected universities will research a wide range of transportation-related issues including shared rail corridors, innovations in multimodal freight and infrastructure, bridge inspection methods, and reducing roadway fatalities and injuries.

## **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY MAYOR GIMENEZ JOINS LETTER URGING DHS SEC. NAPOLITANO TO SUPPORT UASI FUNDING FOR THE COUNTY**

Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez signed onto a letter from 16 jurisdictions to Secretary Napolitano this week, supporting efforts to fund the UASI program at \$600 million in FY 12. The letter also supports level funding (\$35 million) for the National Metropolitan Medical Response System (NMRS).

OIA, OEM, MDPD and MDFR continue their pursuit of federal emergency management dollars and advocacy for the inclusion of the Ft. Lauderdale/Miami UASI for recognition as a Tier 1 UASI entity.

Last Wednesday Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Frederica Wilson, Ted Deutch and Alcee Hastings' office spoke with Elizabeth Harman, Asst. Director at DHS for Grants and impressed upon DHS the importance of the UASI program and for appropriate

consideration of the Ft. Lauderdale/Miami UASI. Throughout the call, the members advocated for Tier 1 consideration.

As part of the conversation, DHS acknowledged the unique risk factors for the UASI that should be considered, including those we raised during the coalition's September meetings: increased consideration for seaports and coastline, and cruise line occupants. DHS advised that no allocation decisions have yet been made, however, they advised that internal decisions about Tier status may be decided soon. During the call DHS raised criticisms that have been leveled by Congress about the delays in spending of already appropriated and allocated UASI funds, with a significant amount from 2007-2011 not spent. DHS is providing Rep. Deutch with details about this per their records for the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale UASI.

Earlier this year, Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners Chairman Joe Martinez joined mayors from throughout the country, including Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado, in a letter to U.S. House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers (KY) which strongly opposed the FY 2012 House Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee action to limit the funds provided under section 2003 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 604) to the top 10 highest risk urban areas. Currently, Miami-Dade County and City of Miami receive funding under this program; however, under the provisions of this bill, they are one of the jurisdictions that would be removed from the funding list. OIA, MDPD, OEM and the South Florida UASI delegation worked with the Federal Lobbying Team in a successful effort to urge congress to reverse this provision.

Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz also voiced strong support for UASI funding in his recent official visit to Washington, while meeting with the White House and Miami-Dade County congressional delegation.

## **REP WILSON INTRODUCES RESOLUTION CALLING FOR END TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN HAITI**

On Monday, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson introduced a resolution calling for the United States to work with the Haitian government to end gender-based violence in the country.

Official estimates show that almost 600,000 Haitians are still living in internally displaced person (IDP) camps without adequate housing, sanitation, healthcare services, lighting or security. Many people outside these camps have also been living in precarious situations since the quake.

Though deep-seated gender discrimination and violence against women and children have long marred Haitian society, as they do in many countries worldwide, those living in displacement camps and other impoverished communities have experienced increased vulnerability to sexual and other forms of gender-based violence.

*"Now is the time for the United States to renew its commitment to Haitian women and children, and for us to make the issue of ending gender-based violence a priority for both our countries,"* said Rep. Wilson.

The Congresswoman's resolution would:

- Reassure the people of Haiti, particularly vulnerable women and children, that the United States remains a committed partner in the fight to end all forms of gender-based violence in Haiti;
- Encourage the Administration, through the State Department and USAID, to support the Haitian Government's proactive steps that are consistent with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' recommendations on sexual violence in IDP camps, to eliminate gender-based violence; and
- Reinforce the efforts of the Haitian Government as it contemplates comprehensive legislative reforms aimed at eliminating violence against women and girls.

## **REP. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ ATTENDS STATE OF THE UNION WITH MIAMI SOLDIER**

2nd Lt. Brittany Ramos attended Tuesday's State of the Union address as the guest of Miami-Dade Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz. Ramos, who resides in the Congresswoman's congressional district, graduated last May from the University of Miami and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Army. She is assigned to the 841st Engineer Battalion Forward Support Company, under the 926th Engineer Brigade, 412th Theater Engineer Command. In February, Ramos will be deployed to Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. Her platoon will be responsible for vehicle recovery and maintenance, as well as partnering with the Afghan National Army to assist in combat and construction mission training.

*"Our brave women and men in uniform proudly perform one of the toughest jobs in America – protecting our freedom, while often risking their own lives in the process,"* said Rep. Wasserman Schultz. *"I'm so pleased Lieutenant Ramos will be coming to Washington, D.C. to watch the State of the Union address. She is an inspiring example of the importance of public service to our country. I applaud her for all her hard work and know that she will make the United States proud as she serves overseas."*

## **CLIMATE COMMUNITIES**

Thursday's Climate Communities webinar was titled "Green Building & Urban Heat Island Mitigation - A New Look at Old Sustainability Strategies." The presentation provided an overview of some of the most common approaches for reducing building energy consumption and improving the urban atmospheric environment. Climate Communities said "these strategies include multiple competing options for roofing and paving. Advocates for any one technology often highlight a limited set of performance characteristics." The presentation will also provide a more comprehensive framework for considering the multiple benefits as well as the unintended consequences of some of these strategies. Dr. David Sailor, the founding director of the Green Building Research Laboratory at



Portland State University, who received his Ph.D. in 1993 from the University of California at Berkeley, joined the call.

## **PRESIDENT OBAMA TRIP TO MIAMI**

President Obama is scheduled to travel to Miami on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Details of his trip have yet to be released, but it's likely that the visit will focus on the ongoing housing and foreclosure issues confronting the state and South Florida in particular.

## **THE 2012 GOP PRESIDENTIAL FIELD: FLORIDA PRIMARY UP NEXT**

Florida will hold their primary on Tuesday, January 31<sup>st</sup>.

### *CANDIDATES REMAINING*

Newt Gingrich – former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives

Ron Paul – U.S. Rep. from Texas

Mitt Romney – former Gov. of Massachusetts

Rick Santorum – former Sen. from Pennsylvania

*-Herman Cain, former CEO of Godfather's Pizza, has suspended his campaign*

*-Michele Bachmann, U.S. Rep. from Minnesota, has suspended her campaign*

*-Rick Perry, Gov. of Texas, has suspended his campaign*

*-Jon Huntsman, former Gov. of Utah & former Ambassador to China, has suspended his campaign*

## **FEDERAL LOBBYIST REPORTS**

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## **NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR: JANUARY 30TH – FEBRUARY 3RD**

*The House will be in session next week.*

*The Senate will be in session next week.*

## **WASHINGTON WEEKLY REPORT**

### **January 30TH – FEBRUARY 3RD, 2012**

**Below is an informal overview of the Washington D.C. activities of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs:**

*THE SENATE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

*THE HOUSE WAS IN SESSION THIS WEEK*

### **CHAIRMAN MICA, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HOST MIC TOUR - OIA WORKS WITH CHAIRMAN MICA, MIA, MDT, FDOT TO COORDINATE EVENT**

House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Chairman John Mica toured the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) on Monday, January 30<sup>th</sup>. The Chairman counted among his guests who visited the County - railroad executives from throughout the country, members of the House T&I Committee, members of the County's congressional delegation, FDOT officials and County officials and staff. Invited County officials included Mayor Gimenez, Chairman Martinez and the Board of County Commissioners, Directors Abreu, Johnson and Yort, and their staffs. The purpose of the event was to showcase the MIC as a national model for intermodal and infrastructure investment. The participants received a briefing from MIA, MDT and FDOT officials, and a demonstration ride on Tri-Rail's commuter rail diesel multiple unit (DMU) passenger rail cars.

### **VISA WAIVER FOR BRAZIL GAINS TRACTION IN CONGRESS**

Earlier this week, Rep. Mike Quigley (IL) introduced H.R. 3855, "the Visa Waiver Program Enhanced Security and Reform Act" a bipartisan bill that would expand the visa waiver program for certain countries, including Brazil. The measure would significantly increase inbound travel to Miami-Dade County (in addition to having a positive impact on retail spending and property purchases in the County). The Senate version of the bill was introduced by Sen. Barbara Mikulski on the same day and has received bipartisan support.

Last July, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Javier Souto sponsored and Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz and Commissioner Rebeca Sosa co-sponsored a resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, calling on the federal government and Congress to ease visa restrictions in certain countries, including Brazil, provided that adequate homeland security measures are in place.

H.R. 3855 currently has 19 cosponsors, including County Reps. Ros-Lehtinen, Diaz-Balart and Rivera. The President endorsed the bill during his May 2011 trip to Poland. More importantly for Miami-Dade County, the bill also includes provisions expanding the visa waiver program to Brazil, Argentina and Chile, as well as Taiwan. Rep. Ros-Lehtinen's support for the measure is critical, as she chairs the House Foreign Relations

Committee which leads oversight of the visa-waiver program administered through both the State Department and Department of Homeland Security.

The positive economic impact for Miami-Dade County of just Brazil obtaining visa waiver status cannot be overstated, as a recent New York Times article pointed out: *“According to the U.S. Commerce Department, 1.2 million Brazilians visited the U.S. in 2010 and spent \$5.9 billion, or \$4,940 for each visitor. Most of the Brazilians who come to the United States visit Florida, and in the first nine months of 2011, an estimated 1.1 million Brazilians spent \$1.6 billion in the state, an increase of nearly 60 percent from the previous year. Among foreign nations, only Canada sends more visitors to Florida.”*

OIA has worked closely with MIA and travel and tourism industry stakeholders in Washington, including Patricia Rojas at the U.S. Travel Association (USTA), who has taken the lead on advocating for this bill before Congress and the Obama Administration. USTA is an invaluable resource and OIA will continue to partner with the group to advocate for support from Representatives Wasserman Shultz and Wilson, in addition to urging support by Senators Rubio and Nelson for the Senate version of the legislation.

## **REP. DIAZ-BALART LEADS COLOMBIA CAUCUS MEETING WITH NEW COLOMBIAN LABOR MINISTER PARDO**

Congressional Colombia Caucus Co-Chairs, Mario Diaz Balart and Henry Cuellar (TX), and Gregory Meeks (NY) met with newly appointed Colombian Labor Minister Rafael Pardo. The meeting focused on the bilateral relations between the United State and Colombia, including labor, trade expansion and economic growth.

In a statement from Rep. Diaz-Balart: *“It was a pleasure meeting with Colombia’s Labor Minister, Rafael Pardo. Colombia continues committed to security in our hemisphere and around the world. They continue to fight for freedom, democracy, and combat illegal drug trafficking making tremendous progress on all fronts. As we continue to implement the free trade agreement, Americans as well as Colombians will have the opportunity to get back to work, strengthening both countries economically. Colombia is our great ally and friend, I believe our economic and strategic partnership will continue to grow stronger...”*

The Congressional Caucus on Colombia hosted the meeting with Minister Pardo. In 2009, Reps. Cuellar, Diaz-Balart, Meeks, and Aaron Schock (IL) co-founded the Caucus to strengthen political, economic, and security ties between the United State and Colombia. The Caucus has held meetings and briefings with Colombian officials and dignitaries including Vice President Angelino Garzon, Ambassador and former Defense Minister Gabriel Silva, former Trade Minister Luis Guillermo Plata, and former Ambassador Carolina

## **HOUSE PANEL PASSES TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION BILL**

In a long and contentious 17-hour mark-up, the House T&I Committee approved by a party-line vote of 29-24, the American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act. The House bill provides very near current funding levels (five-year, \$260 billion bill) for highways and transit for five years. It makes significant reforms to individual programs, including New Starts.

The bill faces long odds to be passed this year. According to observers, the partisan tone during the mark-up is an indication the bill would not receive Democratic support. Furthermore, GOP leaders also face divisions within their own ranks, as conservative policy groups such as the Club for Growth are refusing to back the measure, calling it "bloated and inefficient."

### OVERVIEW OF ISSUES & POTENTIAL CONCERNS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Some of the reforms included in the bill are of concern to local governments, such as the creation of an \$840 million formula program to replace the discretionary Bus and Bus Facilities program that is open only to bus-only systems.

The issue of greatest concern with the House bill, however, is the fundamental restructuring of the Highway Trust Fund, ending the 30 year practice of providing dedicated Highway Trust Fund revenues for mass transit. On Friday, the House Ways and Means Committee marked-up the revenue title of the bill with these fundamental structural changes, passing again by a party-line vote of 20 to 17.

Under the House bill, mass transit programs (along with the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) and territorial highway programs) are transferred into a new Alternative Transportation Account. All gas tax and drilling-related receipts are deposited exclusively into the Highway Trust Fund. By contrast, the Alternative Transportation Account is funded by a one-time appropriation of \$40 billion from the General Fund. The bill provides that the Alternative Transportation Account is contract authority, so annual appropriations would not be needed during the pendency of the bill. (This would be subject to a point of order in Congress, because the body cannot provide contract authority without a user-fee basis, but the bill waives this point of order).

The fundamental problem, however, is what would happen AFTER this reauthorization period. Because this \$40 billion is a one-time appropriation, after the funds are expended, there would no longer be any guarantee of funding for the nation's mass transit programs -- or any source of funding for transit other than competing for new general fund appropriations. As for the \$40 billion appropriation, the source of the offset has still not been disclosed, but it is rumored to have something to do with increased pension contributions for federal workers. The offset is being handled by the House Leadership and will either be inserted at the Rules Committee or on the floor.

### OUTLOOK AND OTHER ISSUES

In both the House and Senate, there is an intention to move these bills to the floor quickly. On the Senate side, the Finance Committee has yet to act to provide the \$12-13 billion in offsets needed for a two-year bill at current funding levels. There was some indication that would happen this past week, but it has been pushed until at least next week, ostensibly as that Committee continues to search for a series of offsets that can garner bi-partisan support. On the House side, the Highway Trust Fund/Alternative Transportation Account issue -- among many other issues, including the ANWR drilling provisions and other proposed offsets -- are all but certain to mean that there will be no Democratic votes for the bill, and that it will have to pass entirely with Republican votes. However, some conservative groups have already attacked the bill for not cutting funding, and have put Members on notice that they will include all votes on the reauthorization on their scorecard. A loss of approximately 25 Republican members would imperil the bill if, as fully expected, there are no

Democratic votes. The House Leadership is whipping hard to get the votes, but undoubtedly will confront significant challenges.

*(Prepared by Patton Boggs Federal Lobbying Team - a formal memo on these developments and next steps early next week.)*

## **HOUSE PASSES LONG TERM FAA BILL – DIRECTOR ABREU WEIGHS IN ON PROVISIONS IMPACTING MIA AND THE COUNTY**

The House on Friday backed an agreement for legislation that would authorize \$15.9 billion annually for federal aviation programs through fiscal 2015. House lawmakers voted 248-169 to adopt the conference report for the measure, which would authorize slightly more funding for the FAA each year than the House had proposed but less than the Senate initially wanted. The proposed authorization is consistent with FY 2012 appropriation levels. The Senate is poised to vote Monday to clear the measure for President Obama's signature. 60 votes will be required for Senate adoption.

Prior to House action, MIA Director Jose Abreu sent a letter to Chairman Mica regarding a modification of eligibility standards under Sec. 208 for the noise set-aside program to include water quality mitigation projects.

## **TIGER IV GRANTS OPEN FOR APPLICATION**

This week the U.S. Department of Transportation announced \$500 million in funding available in FY2012 for Department of Transportation's National Infrastructure Investments (TIGER) grants. The 2012 Appropriations Act requires that TIGER funds are only available for obligation through September 30, 2013. Miami-Dade County has submitted applications for TIGER projects during each of the previous three rounds. In 2010 the county was awarded \$22,767,000 for purposes of constructing an intermodal and rail connection from the Port of Miami as part of the second round of grants through TIGER.

Pre-applications for the federal funding must be submitted by February 20, 2012, at 5 p.m. EST (the "Pre-Application Deadline"). Final applications must be submitted through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) by March 19, 2012, at 5 p.m. EDT (the "Application Deadline"). The DOT pre-application system will open on or before February 13, 2012, to allow prospective applicants to submit pre-applications. Subsequently, the Grants.gov "Apply" function will open on February 22, 2012, allowing applicants to submit applications. Applicants are encouraged to submit pre-applications and applications in advance of the deadlines.

OIA will continue to work with OMB – Office of Grants Coordination, MDT, other stakeholders within the county and the Miami-Dade County Congressional delegation to advocate on behalf of securing federal funds from the TIGER program.

## **REP. DIAZ-BALART INTRODUCES RESOLUTION CONDEMNING THE MURDER OF CUBAN HERO, WILMAN VILLAR MENDOZA**

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart introduced a resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives condemning the murder of Wilman Villar Mendoza and honoring his sacrifice in the cause of freedom for the Cuban people. The Congressman introduced the following statement on the resolution:

*“Wilman Villar Mendoza was a pro-democracy activist in the Cuban Patriotic Union; he was also a husband and father of two young children. On January 19, 2012, he died at the hands of the brutal Castro tyranny after undergoing a hunger strike for protesting beatings, inhumane treatment, and abhorrent prison conditions. His “crime” was daring to demand basic human rights and liberty for the Cuban people. For that, he was arrested on November 14, 2011 and sentenced to four years in prison.*

*“This resolution is a tribute to Villar Mendoza, to the many other precious lives that have been lost throughout the Cuban people’s daily struggle against tyranny. I honor their sacrifices, and will continue to fight for the cause of a free Cuba so that the Castro dictatorship never again robs the life of another hero.”*

## **DURING PASSAGE OF THE STOCK ACT, AN UPDATE ON EARMARKS**

Yesterday, Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel Inouye (HI) announced that the committee will extend the ongoing earmark ban through FY 2013. (At the beginning of the 112th Congress, the House imposed an earmark ban to cover FY 2011 through FY2013; the Senate soon followed with a ban that encompassed FY 2011 and FY 2012).

In making the announcement, Chairman Inouye reiterated his support for earmarks, stressing the Constitutional rights and better judgment of Members in determining the funding needs of their districts / states. He noted, however, the current focus of the President and Congress should remain on spending, revenues and entitlements; and therefore, the earmark ban should continue through FY 2013.

Shortly after Chairman Inouye’s announcement, the Senate rejected a proposal that would have imposed a permanent earmark ban. Senators Pat Toomey (PA) and Claire McCaskill (MO) offered the Earmark Elimination Act (S. 1930) as an amendment to the Stock Trading on Congressional Knowledge (STOCK) Act (S. 2038). The amendment failed by a vote of 40 – 59 (60 votes were required for passage). Senators Nelson and Rubio each voted in favor of the amendment.

The vote may represent the high water mark of the anti-earmark movement. As a vote on an underlying bill destined for passage (the STOCK Act subsequently passed 96 – 3), the amendment vote has broader political implications than those on bills that will not pass, in which they are primarily used as political expressions. This is particularly true in an election year, when such votes are open to significant public scrutiny.

Moreover, leading up to and following the vote, several senior Republican Senators (primarily appropriators) including Thad Cochran (MS), Lamar Alexander (TN), and James Inhofe (OK), expressed sentiments similar to Chairman Inouye in support of the earmarking practice. Even National Republican Senatorial Committee Chairman John Cornyn (TX), while voting in favor of the ban, indicated it was a topic that still needed discussion. In particular, Senate Democratic Majority Leader Harry Reid (NV) has expressed that he believes the Congressional earmarking practice will return and Senate Minority Leader – and Appropriator – Mitch McConnell (KY), while voting for the amendment, is also a longtime earmarker and has remained somewhat mum on the topic of an earmark ban.

OIA and the Federal Lobbying Team will continue to monitor the ongoing earmark ban and report back on any further developments. *(Prepared by Federal Lobbying Team Patton Boggs).*

## **CLIMATE COMMUNITIES**

Thursday's Climate Communities webinar was titled "PACE Financing - A New Opportunity for Residential Retrofits?" and discussed the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program and how it's an innovative finance tool that can help property owners save money on their utility bills. According to Climate Communities, "PACE programs allow property owners to receive low-interest financing for energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements. PACE financing is repaid through a voluntary long-term assessment on property taxes over a 15-20 year time period. The repayment obligation, as well as the benefits of the energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements, is tied to the property. PACE programs eliminate the upfront cost barriers of energy retrofits, and ensure that current and future property owners fairly share the costs and benefits of those improvements."

David Gabrielson, Executive Director of PACENow, joined the webinar to discuss efforts to put PACE back on track in Congress and the courts. The Climate Communities and Gabrielson said that "PACE authorizing legislation has been adopted in 27 states and the District of Columbia, and communities nationwide were beginning to take steps to establish PACE programs. However, in July 2010, the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) ordered Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to stop underwriting home mortgages with PACE assessments and wrongly characterized PACE assessments as loans. Because nearly ninety percent of new mortgages are underwritten by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, this has brought very successful PACE programs to a halt."

The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) adopted a resolution introduced by Commissioner Monestime in early January, in which the BCC urges Congress to pass H.R. 2599, the PACE Assessment Protection Act, or similar legislation that would prevent Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and other Federal residential and commercial mortgage lending regulators from adopting policies that contravene established State and local property assessed clean energy laws. OIA will continue to monitor legislative efforts and work with Climate Communities to advocate Congress regarding H.R. 2599 and PACE related legislation.

## **PRESIDENT OBAMA TRIP TO MIAMI**

President Obama is scheduled to travel to Miami on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Details of his trip have yet to be released, but it's likely that the visit will focus on the ongoing housing and foreclosure issues confronting the state and South Florida in particular.

## **THE 2012 GOP PRESIDENTIAL FIELD: FLORIDA PRIMARY BLOWOUT**

As expected, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney sailed to victory in Florida's winner-take-all primary this past week, bolstering his quest to become the GOP presidential nominee.

### **CANDIDATES REMAINING**

Newt Gingrich – former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives

Ron Paul – U.S. Rep. from Texas

Mitt Romney – former Gov. of Massachusetts

Rick Santorum – former Sen. from Pennsylvania

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